

Uttlesford Local Plan (Issues and Options) 2020-2021

First Consultation: Theme 8 Homes March 2021

Introduction

The Community Stakeholder Forum discussed the theme on Wednesday 10 March 2021 and the theme was then open for comment.

Between 10 March and 21 April 2021, 66 people and organisations responded to the theme.

What we have been told about the theme of Homes

The following is a summary of what people said in response to the question What kind of housing should be built in Uttlesford in the next 20 years and beyond?

To read all the representations in full please go to the [Consultation Portal](#).

What kind of housing should be built in Uttlesford in the next 20 years and beyond?

What you have told us



Achieving good quality homes – good design

Design to respect environment, local vernacular, traditional materials, landscape and heritage setting

Nothing must be built now which needs costly retrofitting.

Introduce Green Design Awards

Develop local design guides.

Design guides should be flexible to homes can be designed on site specific basis.

Building Regulations not planning policy to set technical standards

Specialist Housing



Plan for sheltered housing as part of larger developments. Set District wide target.



Require homes to meet Building regulations on Accessible and Adaptable dwellings and wheel-chair use dwellings.



Identify sites for self-build

Need to evidence the need for this number of gypsy and traveller pitches.



Mitigation against climate change

Prioritise mitigation in design of homes. Incorporate energy saving features. Optimise use of solar energy.

Use construction materials which reduce carbon footprint of building.

Support community energy generation.

Mitigation should be left to Building Regulations

Need to understand time needed for building industry to adapt (supply chain, skills etc)

Need to understand costs of additional demand on electricity supply.



Design and layout of new homes

Recognise that households are still reliant on cars and homes should be built with space for cars.

Apply minimum space standards.

Flexible design which allows for home-working

Dwellings with space for car charging, bike storage, shed, garden for leisure and growing plants, access to community gardens.

Urban developments can have smaller plot sizes that rural developments.



Affordable housing

Build community led and council houses to deliver right mix of houses and right price.

Offer a variety of schemes.

Green energy efficient houses will be cheaper houses to run.

Affordability and sustainability are very effectively provided by Modular homes

Market housing should not be allowed as part of exception site schemes.

Require affordable housing on sites of less than 14 dwellings.

Consider approach to First Homes

Take into account viability; Evidenced by Market Assessment



Types and sizes of dwellings

Plan should favour the needs of those who already live in Uttlesford.

Need for mix of dwelling sizes which will differ by area so policies should not be too rigid.

Need for more quality smaller houses, affording more choice to 'downsizers'.

Provide multi-generational housing.

Type and size to support economic strategy.

Homes: What kind of housing should be built in Uttlesford over the next 20 years and beyond?

Achieving good quality homes – good design

Need to deliver a range of good quality homes, in keeping with local environment, adhering to the vernacular style, traditional materials and respect for the landscape and heritage setting. Council should take a genuinely proactive approach to ensuring good design is delivered.

New homes should be constructed to significantly higher sustainability and aesthetic standards, than is currently the case. The technology exists and the costs are not exorbitant when compared to good quality existing house building approaches.

Nothing must be built now that is soon going to need costly retrofitting.

Combine the various guidance available into a comprehensive checklist for new builds, infills and extensions.

Design guidelines should allow for high-quality, imaginative designs and should not compromise climate change measures for appearances sake.

Design Guides are a useful tool, but policies should have sufficient flexibility to ensure new homes can be designed on a site-specific basis to suit the location and surrounding area responding to the context and identity of settlements.

The focus should be on the local design guide & whilst industry standards may influence the content of the design guide the local plan should not make reference to such standard being met. The only technical standard that developments should be required to meet are those set out in building regulations.

Have green design awards – best: residential home improvement, new green home, self-build, mobile home, commercial business improvements/ new-build business building, designer/ architect, landscaper, business idea with most impact, vertical garden.

The recent report of the Building Better, Building Beautiful Commission provides a useful steer and compliance with this, along with sustainability opportunities, should form the basis of new home design.

Balance local opinion with advice from a variety of housebuilders about what their market research is suggesting about buyer demands and needs – especially in the wake of the pandemic. These needs are likely to evolve over time and the Plan must be flexible enough to accommodate this.

Lifetime homes should be encouraged.

Design and Layout of new housing

The Plan needs to recognise that households are still reliant on cars and homes should be built with space for cars, whether on-plot or off site but must avoid on street/pavement parking. Car parking standards must be realistic as cars will not disappear. Car charging points must be provided at parking space whether at house or communal parking.

Parking must be available on site.

In urban developments plot sizes can be smaller and larger gardens should be encouraged in rural developments even if this means expanding the village envelope.

Minimum space standards should apply to all buildings.

Include space to work from home or allow a flexible design that allows for home-working (e.g. the ability to partition off areas or space for garden buildings).

Dwelling should have private gardens and be large enough for leisure use, plants and artificial surfaces discouraged. Front gardens give opportunity to converse with neighbours.

The size of the area given around the house for car charging, bike storage, shed, space for veg garden and space for the gardens cannot be underestimated. It enables foods to be grown, sheds and work space, play space and vital room for plants.

Not everyone wishes to grow their own food in their garden. Support a community based approach to facilities for food growing and a review of the types of open spaces to be provided within developments.

Allotments and open spaces should be designed into schemes.

If garden space is lost to dwelling extensions, then this should be compensated for by green roofs/walls etc.

Broadband, off-street parking and power provision are priority.

UDC should lobby Government to restrict the level of permitted development rights particularly in relation to double storey extensions and loft conversions.

Mitigating against climate change

Homes should incorporate energy saving features. Energy efficiency must be high up the agenda for new builds. Energy efficient homes will be cheaper to run and end fuel poverty. Sufficient natural light reduces need for electrical lighting. All measures to assist with ensuring that any new development/extension is as eco-friendly as possible should be required – solar panels, electric vehicle charging, heat recovery systems, insulation, electric boilers, water recycling etc.

Building small estates with green eco-houses (having excellent insulation, solar energy, heat pumps and water efficient fittings) and designated tree lined and open land areas will help with climate change

Local Plan should prioritise mitigating climate change in the design of homes.

Homes must be designed to enable natural cooling; high levels of insulation in roof, walls, floor and windows; allied with provision for good ventilation.

Water sources must be protected, and individual houses must incorporate water efficiency measures.

Heat exchange of water and ventilation technologies will get massively cheaper when they are fitted as standard.

Policies should require optimum use of solar energy; PV should be supplied as standard on homes and mandatory on all commercial builds.

The Plan must lead to a reduction in the carbon footprint of construction and make housing a carbon sink by use of timber and other such products. We can't dictate to developers, but by setting ambitious clear carbon targets, based on reaching carbon zero by 2030, we will be encouraging and giving permissions to developers who are willing to apply these technologies and stimulate new sustainable industries.

Support community energy generation in all new developments.

Properties should be built to passive-house standard.

Apply Fabric First approach.

Mitigation should be left to Building Regulations.

Important that Councils recognise that it will take time to ensure that the technology required to achieve net zero emission from new homes has not been delivered to date on large scale. There is still considerable work to do to ensure that supply chains are in place to supply the housebuilding industry as well as the technical skills in place to deliver & maintain systems.

Important to recognise that these new technologies will change patterns of demand for electricity supply. It will be important that infrastructure is improved where necessary to address these changing patterns of demand.

A requirement for large numbers of EVCPs will require a larger connection to the development & will introduce a power supply requirement otherwise not needed. The level of upgrade needed is dependent on the capacity available in the local network resulting in additional costs in relation to charge point instalment.

Specialist housing

The plan should allocate/identify land for self-building.

The need for this number of gypsy and traveller pitches must be supported by evidence.

Sheltered housing should be planned as part of larger new developments.

Build according to requirements of evidence.

A mix of all needed housing needs to be allocated in new development, from starter homes to elderly housing and care homes.

Any policy supporting the provision of accommodation for older people should include a target as to how many homes for older people will be delivered in the District.

Recommend that the Council require that new homes are designed to meet the Building Regulations Requirement on Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings and on larger sites, a proportion of dwellings will be expected to meet the Building Regulations Requirement Wheelchair User Dwellings, depending on the local need for this type of accommodation.

Types and sizes of dwellings

It is important to distinguish between internal needs generated by existing residents and the external needs of those wishing to move to the district. Typically, internal demand is for smaller and more affordable properties, whilst developers build larger homes. The Plan should favour those who already live and work in the area.

There is always a need for a mix of dwelling sizes, which will differ by area and so any regulations should not be rigid. Reflect the pattern of established rural villages and market towns.

There is a requirement for more emphasis on 3 and 4 bed market houses and 2 and 3 bed flats/houses, some of which should be affordable.

Avoid building too many flats as occupants should not be disassociated from gardens.

There should be provision for some 1, 2, or 3 bed rental homes on larger developments.

There is too much emphasis on 4, 5 bed luxury commuter homes, which are more profitable for the developer. If there were more quality smaller houses, affording more choice to

"downsizers," this would release more 4 and 5 bed quality housing onto the market for younger families to fill.

Modular designed homes would allow larger homes to be split into smaller properties.

Provide multi-generational housing as we are not all nuclear families.

The type and size of houses will depend on the demands of the market. Consider what is already in the pipeline.

Studio accommodation could be built for starter homes for single young people on starter mortgages.

The plan needs to deliver bungalows for elderly and disabled people to downsize. Housing association bungalows need to be safeguarded for over 60s and those with accessibility issues. Development rights should be removed from all new bungalows, so that any change to a chalet bungalow or house is considered on a case-by-case basis.

Do not assume all older people are looking for smaller properties.

Policy should allow the conversion of redundant retail premises into houses and apartments.

New homes developed in Uttlesford should provide for a greater number and wider range of people. This includes the building of houses and apartments to suit a wide range of future occupants and include a range of private and affordable housing.

Policy should allow scope for flexibility and for site consideration to be factored into housing mixes for development sites. Housing mix policies should be more responsive to buyer demands and balanced with population evidence and household size predictions.

The use of housing policies should be considered and tested to ensure the delivery and wider benefits brought by development are not prejudiced and affordability is not impacted.

The Local Plan should explore the full range of tenure options. Delivering a mixed tenure of dwellings and house types is best achieved through growth delivered on a strategic scale, making it easier to plan for and deliver the right type and mix of housing.

Important to consider the type of housing required to support the wider economic strategies of the region and the need to attract and retain a working age population. This is more relevant than the mix associated past delivery of housing. There should be flexibility in terms of housing mix. The economic strategy and the housing strategy should be properly aligned.

Policies allocating sites should set out required housing mix, tenure and any specialist housing requirements. Technical requirements should be set out in development management policies.

Affordable housing

There is a need affordable housing to meet those in most need. Refer to affordable housing needs identified in Neighbourhood Plans.

If the provision of affordable housing is being questioned because it makes the scheme unviable then the Council must obtain independent viability advice.

Different ways of delivery affordable housing should be used in conjunction - if different allocations use different approaches, then it is likely that there will be a positive net result across sites.

A variety of schemes should be offered to enable lower-paid residents to participate in the housing market.

Community-led, rural exception sites and UDC Council House building should be encouraged to ensure that the right mix of houses are delivered at the right price. It also allows people to live close to where they grew up to support the wellbeing of communities.

Affordability should be based on local incomes.

Rent to buy options should be available.

'Green' energy efficient houses will be cheaper houses to run and the lower fuel bills will make up for the initial investment.

Affordability and sustainability are very effectively provided by Modular homes, manufactured in local factories. £80,000 for a 2 bedroom house. A quarter of the average price in Uttlesford! Fully equipped, but excluding the cost of land or groundwork. They take just 3 days to build on site. They could provide the basis of a dynamic council, privately rented and rent-to-buy market.

Market housing should not be allowed as part of exception site schemes.

Require affordable housing on sites of less than 14 dwellings.

A new plan must be based on what housing is needed and where. In Uttlesford, this analysis should lead to a strategy based on providing affordable housing in existing communities.

The Council will need to demonstrate that requiring 40% affordable housing is viable across the district.

Can UDC lend money at lower cost, to those who cannot afford mortgages from banks, and keep our local economy going by investing in local people? If this isn't possible then can UDC lobby central Government to allow this.

Support Council built and managed housing. Once tenants are able, they should be encouraged to move into their own accommodation, freeing the property for others.

Starter homes should be given priority on all sites. Specific needs should be reflected in specific allocations where the need actually exists. That would ensure that a developer was clear on the nature of affordable housing that was required on each allocated site.

Need to consider approach to First Homes. It can be used to support the vitality of smaller settlements in the District by giving local families an opportunity to buy in areas they would not usually be able to due to limited supply. The Council should develop a positive policy which also provides an environment that would allow First Homes Exception Sites to come forward.

NPPF requires 10% of all homes on major sites to be affordable home ownership, & that these homes will form part of the overall affordable housing supply on site.

The affordable housing mix and tenure mix requirements should be informed by a detailed up to date strategic housing market assessment. The minimum tenure mix requirements should attempt to strike a balance between ensuring Uttlesford's overall strategic housing needs are met, including contributing towards affordable needs, and providing parishes and neighbourhoods with adequate flexibility to address local variations in viability.

Consultee specific comments

Felsted Parish Council refer to their neighbourhood plan <https://www.felsted-pc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/Felsted-NP.pdf>

Essex County Council - The Essex Housing Strategy has the following strategic goals -

1. To enable people to live independently throughout their life. ECC will work with partners to deliver: -
 - a. New homes and places are designed for residents to live independent and healthy lives
 - b. Homes are adapted and digital technologies adopted, to support residents to live independently.
 - c. Access to high quality specialist and supported accommodation for those who need it.
2. Growing Essex while protecting the best of the County
 - a. Ensuring the number of new homes meet local needs, including for affordable homes.
 - b. House building provides jobs, develops skills and helps Essex firms to thrive.
 - c. New housing developments are built - and existing homes retrofitted - to meet net zero carbon requirements.

Chelmsford City Council - expects UDC to provide the relevant evidence base to reviewing housing need and any identified need would be met by allocations which seek to meet the identified need within the administrative boundary of Uttlesford. CCC also notes that provision for Gypsies and Travellers should also met within the administrative boundary of Uttlesford which will also take account the outcomes of the on-going GTAA transit site evidence base work.

Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service - Homes is one of Greater Cambridge seven big themes. This theme covers how many affordable and market sale homes are needed, and what kind of homes they should be.

Site Promoter comments

Land at Barnston (Generator Group LLP)	A development which will meet required national and local design standards, builds in sustainable methods of construction and design from outset, deliver affordable housing.
'Thaxted Green' (Stonebond Properties)	are promoting a site which would deliver high quality, bespoke housing include affordable housing, which would meet all design standards.
Land west of Station Road, Takeley (Hatfield Broad Oak Parish) (McGowan Ltd)	– support aspiration to deliver housing development which promotes high quality design and meets all environmental standards.
Land south east of Homestead Farm off Bedwell Road in Ugley Green (McPherson)	- the promoted development would deliver high quality housing, which meets all design standards, and which would deliver affordable housing and self-build plots.

<p>'Chelmer View' (Baker and Metson Ltd) -</p>	<p>homes are proposed comprising general needs, elderly, care, adaptable, and self build housing. Planning a new neighbourhood presents the opportunity for greater than minimum standards in terms of garden sizes, providing opportunity to grow food and have home offices, workshops and shared spaces.</p>
<p>North Uttlesford (Grosvenor)</p>	<p>- an opportunity to deliver a substantial amount of housing in a sustainable location, comprising a range of sizes, types and tenures to meet the needs of the District. A range of existing and new market and affordable housing models can be explored for the site and Grosvenor is committed to working with UDC to understand how North Uttlesford can best contribute to addressing the specific needs of the district and increase the opportunity for people to own or rent a home suitable for their needs.</p>
<p>Church End Ashdon (Dale, Hunter)</p>	<p>– Promoting site that has the capacity to provide a mix of house sizes and types as well the inclusions as affordable homes, 'First Homes' and homes for those wishing to downsize.</p>
<p>Home Builders Federation, Pelican Developments</p>	<p>- Development should not be subject to such a scale of obligations that the deliverability of the Local Plan is threatened. Viability assessments need to consider the cumulative costs of proposed changes to Building Regs, 10% biodiversity net gain alongside affordable housing requirements & other S106 costs. (Other comments included under relevant sub-headings above)</p>
<p>Land South of Ickleton Road, Great Chesterford (Thomas Fairhead Ltd)</p>	<p>- Provide a mix of house sizes and types as well the inclusions as affordable homes, 'First Homes' and homes for those wishing to downsize.</p>
<p>Land East of Station Road, Elsenham (Bloor Homes)</p>	<p>- deliver high-quality housing including affordable housing, which meets all design standards. The houses in recent developments comply with the energy efficiency standards in the new Future Homes Standard; the fabric of the houses are built to a high standard, resulting in lower levels of heat loss from windows, walls, floors and roofs and improved energy efficiency; the water efficiency measures are designed to reduce water use; and electrical vehicle charging infrastructure is installed so that charging points can be provided for residents.</p>